

## CAS could strike

If professional staff at the Halton children's aid society vote to strike in the next week, seven supervisors will operate the agency.

"We will only deliver the service that seven people can handle," CAS Executive Director Ron Coupland said. "We will do as well as any other CAS has done."

The 45 professional and support staff of the agency have given the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) a mandate to call a strike in support of their demands for higher wages.

Mr. Coupland said that a no-board report has been issued by a provincial conciliator and the workers will be in a legal strike position in two weeks.

Mr. Coupland said emergency service would be provided "in situations where there is a danger of loss of life or limb".

"If we get into desperate circumstances, I'm sure ways can be found to assist us," he said. "Neither the province, the association of children's aid societies nor the community would tolerate us closing because of a strike."

Mr. Coupland said that in some situations, such as court reports, lawyers or other professionals could be used "but we won't be developing or initiating anything new."

"We will work where we can without breaking the ethics of labor relations," he said.

"We're not interested in coming out of this with bitter feelings or in trying to sabotage the union, that would not be in the interest of the children we serve," he said.

"I'm very optimistic," he added. "I honestly do not believe that there will be a strike."

Mr. Coupland later told the regional health and social service committee, during his budget presentation, that the major stumbling blocks to a settlement are salary, mileage and benefit scales.

"We are currently about 10 per cent behind Hamilton and Peel in those areas and our staff are feeling the pinch," he said.

The average social worker's salary in Halton is about \$17,500 while in neighboring societies the average salary is \$2,000-\$3,000 more.

Another delaying factor in negotiations is regional budget talks, since the region has not yet put a figure of the 20 per cent of CAS funding it provides.

The workers are seeking their first contract as a bargaining unit in the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).

The union was certified in May last year, and has been meeting with Halton CAS management in the meantime.

# Store blaze investigated

By Linda Kirby  
An investigation is underway by Ontario Fire Marshal's officials and Halton Regional Police detectives to determine the cause of an early Tuesday morning fire at Brookville General Store on Guelph Line. No reason has been

given for the fire, which is believed to have started in a vacant apartment at the rear of the store shortly after 1 a.m.

Milton firefighters arrived on the scene at approximately 1:30 a.m. to find the back portion of the building engulfed in flames.

Although the blaze was brought under control

within a few minutes, it took firefighters three hours to extinguish the fire which spread through walls and partitions.

Fire officials estimate damage to the building at \$50,000 and severe smoke and heat damage to the store and contents.

The store was owned and run by Janice E. Koch, who lives a short distance away on a

Guelph Line farm.

Fire investigator Peter Heyerhoff would not confirm arson is suspected, but said "It is a difficult scene" and that a full investigation will be conducted into the fire.

Milton Fire Chief Jim Coulson said he contacted the Ontario Fire Marshal's office after failing to uncover the cause of the fire.

### Kick the habit

The Halton Lung Association will conduct a Smoking Withdrawal Clinic at Sheridan College, Main Campus for five evenings 7.30 to 9.30 from April 6 to April 10, 1981.

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